

The Heroic Vow: November 21st 1691

Let us remember...that we are in the Holy Presence of God.



Along with the virtue of FAITH, De La Salle also made the virtue of ZEAL central in the spirituality of his teachers. He demonstrated his own zeal for his mission throughout his life, but perhaps most dramatically in 1691. For nearly fifteen years, De La Salle had been working to establish the community, but one obstacle followed another. The community seemed doomed. Yet, on November 21st, 1691, John Baptist de La Salle, Nicholas Vuyart, and Gabriel Drolin, committed themselves to bring about and to maintain the work of Christian education, even if they were the only ones left to do so.

De La Salle and his teachers (Brothers) had been in Paris for three years, trying to give meaning and an identity to the work they had undertaken there. During this same time period, all the work they had previously done in Rheims and in surrounding countryside had come to nothing: a few schools continued running, but their own distinctive character was tending to become blurred in the midst of other educational undertakings for the service of the poor.

However, these teachers believed in God and in the need for the service that the Christian schools can offer. They dared believe that God was calling them, and was enabling them to identify the needs of the urban society growing up around them, to respond to them. They believed that, in one another, God was calling them to make some gesture that would affect their lives vis-à-vis society and Church, even if, for the time being they alone would know of its existence.

This is the reason why these three men performed this intimate and radical act. As had already happened in the life of De La Salle and would happen again on numerous occasions, his act of faith was also an act of hope. It was essentially and an act of hope, rooted in the true zeal of the Gospel.

What was so new about that November 21st, 1691 is that it was an act of faith and hope expressed by a community. De La Salle, Drolin and Vuyart stated their conviction to one another that it was together that they received the call of God and the capacity to respond to it. They consecrated themselves to God, to the children of the poor, and to one another. They believed in God and therefore in the capacity of each of the three to respond to God. And so they believed that the capacity of the others was the source of their own. They shared with one another their experience, their fatigue, their gifts, their disappointments, their future. Each vowed to live for the others. They believed that this was the only way to act if the call to God to open the Christian Schools was to be acted upon in their society.

(taken from prayer service by David Hotek)

Meditation: 2 Corinthians 4: 10-14

Continually we carry about in our bodies the dying of Jesus,
so that in our bodies the life of Jesus may also be revealed.

While we live we are constantly being delivered to death for Jesus' sake,
so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal flesh.

Death is at work in us, but life in you.
We have that spirit of faith
of which the Scripture says,
"Because I believed, I spoke out."

We believe and so we speak,
knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus
will raise us up along with Jesus
and place both us and you in his presence.

Intercessions

Leader: Loving God, you have called us to serve you together by touching the hearts, minds and souls of students. Keep us unified in our common mission. God, in your mercy....

All: ...hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you remind us that, where two or three gathered in your name, you are present. May we always be mindful of your saving presence as we go about your saving work. Loving Jesus, in your mercy ...hear our prayer.

Leader: Holy Spirit, you are with us at all times, uniting us in your love. Keep us always united in your love. Holy Spirit, in your mercy...hear our prayer.

Leader: And for what else shall we pray?

Our Father

Closing Prayer:

O God, through St. John Baptist de La Salle,
you have given us the spirit of faith and zeal.
In every age we are challenged to make your spirit come alive in our midst.
Your Spirit guides us by paths unclear and may lead us in ways untested.
Grant that we may know the things that we should do
and have the strength to do them.
Send us your spirit that we too might live the last words of our Founder:
"I adore in all things the will of God in my regard."
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.